

Message Text

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SUBJECT: US-USSR WRITERS CONFERENCE

REF: MOSCOW 9382

1. ACCORDING TO NORMAN COUSINS, THE FIRST US-USSR WRITERS CONFERENCE, HELD IN MOSCOW JUNE 28-30, WAS A SUCCESS. COUSINS INFORMED DEPTOFF IN LENGTHY TELECON THAT THE SOVIETS APPRECIATED THE QUALITY OF THE DISCUSSIONS, WHICH HE DESCRIBED AS "NOT ENTIRELY PLACID BUT FRIENDLY". HE

DESCRIBED THE ATMOSPHERE AT THE SEMINAR AS GOOD; THE SOVIETS APPEARED TO RELISH THE OPPORTUNITY TO MEET WITH PROMINENT AMERICAN WRITERS, AND "WE MADE THEM WANT MORE". ON THE SOVIET SIDE, COUSINS SAID PARTICIPANTS INCLUDED NON-ESTABLISHMENT AS WELL AS ESTABLISHMENT WRITERS.

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2. THE DISSIDENT QUESTION WAS DISCUSSED, AS WELL AS THE ADMINISTRATION'S INTEREST IN HUMAN RIGHTS WHICH THE AMERICAN PARTICIPANTS DESCRIBED AS EXPRESSING THE VIEWS OF THE AMERICAN PEOPLE. WHEN THE SOVIETS CRITICIZED ACTIONS OF OTHER COUNTRIES REGARDING HUMAN RIGHTS IN THE USSR, COUSINS REMINDED THEM OF HOW WORLD OPINION WAS

MOBILIZED IN THE SACCO AND VANZETTI CASE.

3. COUSINS EXTENDED INVITATION TO SOVIETS FOR RETURN CONFERENCE IN THE US, TO TAKE PLACE IN EARLY SPRING 1978, BUT IN ANY CASE NO LATER THAN SIX TO EIGHT MONTHS AFTER THE MOSCOW CONFERENCE. THERE WAS NO FORMAL RESPONSE TO THIS PROPOSAL DURING THE CONFERENCE, ALTHOUGH SEVERAL SOVIET WRITERS PRIVATELY ENCOURAGED COUSINS TO PERSIST WITH THIS PROPOSAL. IN FINAL CALL ON MARKOV AND PANKIN, THEY AGREED TO SECOND CONFERENCE IN THE US AND ASKED COUSINS TO SUGGEST SOVIET WRITERS WHO SHOULD PARTICIPATE.

4. VOZNESENSKIY PROPOSED A JOINTLY PUBLISHED US-USSR MAGAZINE TO DISCUSS LITERARY QUESTIONS, REVIEW BOOKS, ETC., TO BE PUBLISHED IN ONE EDITION, IN BOTH RUSSIAN AND ENGLISH. THE MAGAZINE WOULD BE JOINTLY EDITED AND PRINTED IN THE USSR. COUSIN- RECOGNIZES THE FORMIDABLE DIFFICULTIES IN SUCH A VENTURE BUT POINTED OUT THAT THE US SIDE COULD PERHAPS AGREE TO PURCHASE A NUMBER OF COPIES FOR DISTRIBUTION IN THE US. COUSINS SUGGESTED TO THE SOVIETS THAT HE PREPARE A DUMMY EDIT-ON FOR PRE-LIMINARY DISCUSSION. FEDORENKO, WHOM COUSINS DESCRIBED AS DIFFICULT, WAS NON-COMMITTAL ON THE MAGAZINE PROPOSAL. COUSINS REGRETTED THE INCIDENT OF THE FIRST DAY OF THE CONFERENCE WHERE EMBASSY CAO ROBERT MILLER WAS EXCLUDED FROM THE CONFERENCE, AN ACTION WHICH LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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HE ASCRIBED TO FEDORENKO.

5. DEPARTMENT BELIEVES WE SHOULD PURSUE QUESTION OF SECOND CONFERENCE TO BE HELD IN THE US. CU WILL DISCUSS WITH JAMES READ OF THE KETTERING FOUNDATION, SINCE COUSINS SUGGESTED THE CONFERENCE MIGHT BE HELD IN TANDEM WITH NEXT DARTMOUTH CONFERENCE IN THE US. CU IS PREPARED TO ASSIST IN FUNDING, AS IT DID WITH THE MOSCOW CONFERENCE. WILL ADVISE.

6. DEPARTMENT WOULD APPRECIATE ANY ADDITIONAL INFORMATION WHICH EMBASSY MAY HAVE ON THE MOSCOW CONFERENCE. VANCE

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